

Appl. No.: 10/203,686
Reply to Office Action of: August 11, 2004

Remarks

Claims 1-8 are pending in this application. Claims 1-3 and 6-8 are rejected to and claims 4 and 5 have been objected. The following remarks are addressed to the referenced paragraphs of the Office Action dated August 11, 2004.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b)

Claims 1-3 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Woertz (U.S. Patent No. 3,720,778).

Applicants respectfully contend that claim 1 is allowable because it includes a feature that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references, namely "the contacting device being adapted to be placed on the receptacle such that the piercing contact comes to lie in a freely selectable position in the receptacle." In the present invention the contacts can be made to lie in a freely selectable position in the receptacle, allowing then to contact any one of various conductors in the cable on which the connector is attached. In sharp contrast, the connector of Woertz et al. does not allow the contacts to lie in a freely selectable position in the receptacle. The Office Action argues that screw 61 is a piercing contact, that connecting terminals 56-60 are contacting devices, that cover 36 is a receptacle for receiving the cable, and that the contacting devices (connecting terminals 56-60) are adapted to be placed on the receptacle (cover 36) such that the piercing contacts (screws 61) come to lie in a freely selectable position in the receptacle (cover 36). Applicants respectfully disagree. As clearly stated by Woertz et al. at Col. 2, lines 40-42, "Cover 36 and insulating structure 31 together define a receiving recess 44 for a length of the ribbon cable 10." Thus, the insulating structure 31 of Geotz et al. is an integral part of the receptacle receiving the cable. In fact arms 32 and 33 of insulating structure 31 define the sides

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of the receiving recess 44 and are laid straddling and abutting the ribbon cable before the cover 36 is applied (col. 4, lines 21-42). Moreover, Goetz et al. clearly point out that "connecting terminals 56 to 60 and their contacting screws 61 to 65 are mutually staggered not only in the longitudinal direction but also in the transverse direction of ribbon cable 10 so that the axis of rotation of any of the contact screws intersects the longitudinal axis of an associated conductor of ribbon cable ..." (Col. 3, lines 12-18). Also, Goetz et al. state that "[b]ecause of the mutually adapted shaping of ribbon cable 10 and the configuration of receiving recess 44 of conductor 30, terminal 56 can only be connected by means of screws 61 with conductor 11, terminal 57 only with conductor 12 by means of screw 62 ..." (Col. 4, lines 42-47). Goetz et al. not only fail to disclose or suggest that the piercing contacts come to lie in a freely selectable position in the receptacle, they actually teach away from this structural relationship, teaching instead the desirability of providing the piercing contact at a given and fixed position to connect to a particular conductor of the cable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully contend that claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1 and Applicants respectfully contend that they are allowable for the reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

Further, Applicants contend that claim 3 is also allowable for the additional reason that it includes another feature that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references, namely "a rotary unit mounted rotatably in the holder and having the piercing contacts arranged thereon." The Office Action suggests that screw (61), which is argued to be the piercing contact in parent claim 1, is now argued to be a rotary unit and the tip (68) of the screw (61) is now argued to be the piercing contacts. Applicants respectfully contend that the tip (68) would not be considered a piercing contact within the meaning of that phrase in the relevant art. To the contrary, one

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skilled in the art of electrical connectors would understand a piercing contact to be the entire conductive spike (or screw) and not merely its tip. Moreover, intervening claim 2 provides a plurality of piercing contacts and claim 3 provides that the contacts are arranged on the rotary unit, which is one of two parts of the contacting device. The device of Goetz et al. would be inoperative if a plurality of tips were provided on one screw.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's statement that claims 4 and 5 include allowable subject matter. Rewriting of claims 4 and 5 as suggested by the Examiner is held in abeyance pending reconsideration of claims 1 and 3 in view of the foregoing arguments.

Newly Added Claim

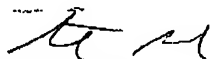
Claims 9 and 10 are newly added to precisely claim an embodiment of the present invention. No new matter has been added.

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Conclusion

For all of the foregoing reasons and in view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully contend that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments, allowance of claims 1-9, and issuance of Letters Patent for the subject invention. Please charge any additional requisite fees relating to this amendment and response to Deposit Account No. 50-1581.

Respectfully submitted,



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